

the first book: the pleading of the Federal, the second: the decree of the Omnipotent is mystical. It declares that a man is born of supernatural energies and that whichever side he embraces will succeed, or to that effect. The man is Napoleon just about to conquer Italy. The spirits descend to earth to join him. He adopts the Federal or Democratic side. The Feudal stirs up the Kings against him. Hence my machinery! The next two books contain the conquest of Italy, very little vulgar fighting but highly idealised. This is all — about 4,000 lines—that I shall now venture to print; the whole of it is matured in my mind, though probably it could not be completed under 30,000 lines. What do you think of it? The conception seems to me sublime. All depends on the execution. I have finished the three first books. The two first cost me much the most trouble; the rest is play work.

Mrs. Austen was still his literary Egeria. 'You appear,' he tells her, <sup>4</sup> to be the only person in the world except myself who have any energy. What would I give to have you always at my right hand ? ' When he wants a description of Josephine he appeals to her. 'Are you sure that a Creole is dark ? No matter, I will make her brunette. . . . I was introduced to the King of Spain and the Prince of Canino (Lucien) last year, but do not like to write to them.' Or again,

I have got [a grand simile about a S. Wester, I think they call it: and am perfectly ignorant of the geography of the wind and have no atlas here. I mean that wind that blows, I think, about the Cape and knocks the Honourable Company's ships about. Daniel has a famous picture about it, consisting of one ship and one wave. Is it a S. Wester that I mean, and whence does it blow, and all about it ? Get it up for the 16th.'

On the 16th of January he was to dine with the Austens, and he promised to put a canto of his work in his bag and if they were alone 'to perform the part of the Importunate Author and bore them with a grand recitation.' They were not alone, but the grand

recitation was given all the same.  
'There was something irresistibly  
comic,' •writes an eye-witness' of the  
scene that followed, \* in the young  
man dressed in the fantastic,  
coxcombical costume <sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Layard  
in the *Quarterly Review* for January, 1889.